

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A ~~tunnel~~ tunnel system, comprising:
a multi-lumen catheter; and
a tunneler removably retained to the catheter, the tunneler comprising:
a tip containing gripping means;
a plurality of flexible connector shaft members having a first end extending from the tip and a second end that is closed, the plurality of connector shaft members having unequal lengths; and
a rigid tunneler shaft containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed and a second end proximate the tip.
2. (currently amended) The ~~tunnel~~ tunnel system of claim 1, wherein each connector shaft member is retained in ~~the~~ a lumen of ~~a~~ the catheter.
3. (currently amended) The ~~tunnel~~ tunnel system of claim 2, wherein the connector shaft member is ~~capable of being~~ retained in the lumen by using a protrusion.
4. (currently amended) The ~~tunnel~~ tunnel system of claim 1, wherein the difference in the lengths of the connector shaft member ranges up to about 20%.
5. (currently amended) A tunneling system, comprising:
a multi-lumen catheter; and
a tunneler removably retained to the catheter, the tunneler comprising:
a tip containing gripping means;

a plurality of flexible connector shaft members having a first end extending from the tip and a second end that is closed, the plurality of connector shaft members having unequal lengths that are retained in the lumens of the catheter; and

a rigid tunneler shaft containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed and a second end proximate the tip.

6. (currently amended) The system of claim 5, wherein each connector shaft member is ~~capable of being retained in the a lumen of a~~ the catheter.

7. (previously presented) The system of claim 6, wherein the connector shaft member is retained in the lumen by using a protrusion that is located near the second end of the connector shaft member.

8. (previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein the difference in the lengths of the connector shaft members ranges up to about 20%.

9. (previously presented) The system of claim 6, wherein the tunneler shaft is removably connected to the tip at the second end.

10. (original) The system of claim 9, further comprising a sheath that covers a portion of the tip and tunneler shaft that are connected.

11. (original) The system of claim 10, wherein the sheath is retained both on the tip and on the tunneler shaft.

12. (original) The system of claim 11, wherein the sheath is retained on the tip using a retaining ring.

13. (previously presented) The system of claim 12, wherein the retaining ring complements a protrusion on the connector shaft member.

14. (previously presented) The system of claim 5, wherein only one connector shaft member is retained in the lumen of a catheter.

15. (currently amended) A tunneling system, comprising:

a multi-lumen catheter; and

a tunneler removably retained to the catheter, the tunneler comprising:

a tip containing gripping means and a plurality of flexible connector shaft members having a first end extending from the tip and a second end that is closed, the plurality of connector shaft members having unequal lengths that are retained in the lumens of the catheter;

a tunneler shaft having a second end that is removably connected to the tip and a first end capable of creating a tunnel in the skin of a patient, the shaft made of rigid materials and containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed; and

a sheath covering a portion of the tip and the tunneler shaft that are connected.

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein each connector shaft member contains a protrusion thereon.

17. (original) The system of claim 16, wherein the sheath is retained both on the tip and on the tunneler shaft.

18. (original) The system of claim 17, wherein the sheath is retained on the tip using a retaining ring.

19. (previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the retaining ring complements the protrusion on a connector shaft member.

20. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein only one connector shaft member contains a protrusion thereon.

21. (currently amended) A medical device containing a tunneling system comprising:
a multi-lumen catheter; and

a tunneler removably retained to the catheter, the tunneler comprising:

~~with~~ a tip containing gripping means; ~~and~~

a plurality of flexible connector shaft members having a first end extending from the tip and a second end that is closed, the plurality of connector shaft members having unequal lengths, and

a rigid tunneler shaft containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed and a second end proximate the tip.

22-25. (canceled).

26. (currently amended) A tunneler that creates a tunnel in the skin of a patient for insertion of a multi-lumen catheter, comprising:

a tip containing gripping means;

a tunneler shaft having a second end proximate the tip and that ~~is capable of creating~~ creates a tunnel in the skin of a patient, the shaft made of rigid materials and containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed;

a plurality of flexible connector shaft members extending from the tip, the plurality of connector shaft members having unequal lengths and being closed at an end distal the tip, the connector shaft members being retained in the lumens of the catheter while the tunnel is created and then being removed after the tunnel is created; and

a sheath covering a portion of the tip and the tunneler shaft that are connected.

27. (currently amended) The tunneler of claim 26 ~~27~~, wherein each connector shaft member is ~~capable of being~~ retained in the lumen of a catheter by using a circular or oval shaped protrusion located on the tunneler shaft.

28. (currently amended) A medical device, comprising:

a multi-lumen cathether;

a tunneler removably retained to the catheter, the tunneler comprising:

a tip containing gripping means;

a plurality of flexible connector shaft members extending from the tip, the plurality of tip shaft members having unequal lengths and being closed at an end distal the tip and ~~capable of~~ being retained in a lumen of a catheter by using a protrusion on the exterior of the connector shaft member; and

a tunneler shaft ~~capable of creating~~ that creates a tunnel in the skin of a patient, the shaft made of rigid materials and containing a first end with a tapered section that is closed.